

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, November 26, 2004

DC STEPS UP EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The MPDC is receiving a grant of \$450,000 to expand efforts to combat trafficking in persons for prostitution and sexual exploitation, federal authorities announced this past week. The local grant is part of a \$7.6 million US Department of Justice program that will enable state and local law enforcement to fight human trafficking by creating task forces to aid in the identification and rescue of human trafficking victims. The newly created DC Task Force on Trafficking in Persons concentrates the resources of the Criminal and Civil Rights Divisions of the Department of Justice, the US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia, the FBI and the MPDC on the problem of human trafficking in the District of Columbia. The law enforcement component of the Task Force will build upon MPDC's long-standing efforts to combat prostitution in DC through its highly-experienced Prostitution Enforcement Unit. Along with dedicated resources from the FBI, MPDC officers and FBI agents will continue to identify and apprehend prostitutes on the street and then work "up the chain" to make cases against the traffickers themselves. The Task Force will also work closely with community organizations and support groups committed to helping the victims of this crime. The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) provided and will administer the awards under the new grant program.

- ① Read the Justice Department news release at:
http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2004/November/04_opa_760.htm
- ① For background information on human trafficking, and efforts to combat the problem, go to:
<http://www.usdoj.gov/trafficking.htm>
- ① To report human trafficking crimes, or to get help for victims, call the federal toll-free hotline, 1 (888) 428-7581 (voice and TTY).
- ① To report prostitution activity in your neighborhood, contact your local PSA lieutenant or the Prostitution Enforcement Unit at (202) 727-1818.

REPORTED HATE CRIMES IN DC ROSE IN 2003; INCREASE LIKELY TIED TO ENHANCED OUTREACH EFFORTS

The number of hate crimes reported in DC more than doubled during 2003, but officials said the rise is likely tied to increased community outreach efforts and reporting by victims. According to the FBI's annual Hate Crime Statistics report, there were 31 crimes motivated by hatred or bias in DC during 2003. That compares with 14 incidents reported in 2002 and 11 in 2001. All but one of the 2003 incidents were reported to the MPDC; the other was reported to the Metro Transit Police Department. Of the 31 reported hate crimes last year, 17 involved a bias motivation related to sexual orientation, 10 involved race, and 2 each involved religion and ethnicity. In 2002, 9 of the 14 incidents involved sexual orientation bias, 3 involved ethnicity, and 2 race. Realizing that historically only a small percentage of actual bias-motivated crimes are actually reported to the police, the MPDC has stepped up efforts in recent years to get victims of hate crimes to come forward and report the offenses. For example, the Department's Gay and Lesbian Liaison, Latino Liaison and Asian Liaison units have increased community outreach activities in an effort to gain greater trust among these populations, which can be particularly vulnerable to hate crimes. The success of their outreach efforts is likely reflected in the latest hate crimes statistics. Nationwide, there were 7,489 reported hate crime incidents last year, up slightly from the 7,462 incidents reported in 2002.

- ① Review the hate crime reports for 2003 and other years on the FBI website at:
<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#hate>
- ① For information on what constitutes a hate crime in DC, and what is being done to combat the problem, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/other/hatecrimes.shtm>
- ① FTo encourage hate crime victims to report their offenses, the MPDC operates a Hate Crimes Hotline, (202) 727-0500.
- ① Learn more about the services offered by the MPDC various liaison units at:
http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/specialized_units.shtm

SEAT BELT USE INCREASES AGAIN IN DC

The use of safety belts increased again this year in DC, which joined Puerto Rico and 37 states with higher belt usage rates in 2004, according to the latest statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Released this past week, the NHTSA report showed that safety belt use in DC reached a record high 87.1 percent in 2004. That compares with a use rate of 84.9 percent in 2003 and 77.9 percent in 1999. Nationally, DC ranked 10th in seat belt use, with Arizona (95.3%) and Hawaii (95.1%) leading the nation. DC continues to have one of the highest use rates among urban and minority populations in the country. Maryland recorded a seat belt use rate of 89 percent in 2004; Virginia's rate was 79.9 percent. The new state-by-state statistics were released by the US Department of Transportation as numerous law enforcement agencies began conducting major safety belt use crackdowns over the holiday period. Federal officials credited the increase in safety belt use to tough laws, such as DC's "primary" law (which allows police to stop motorists for observed seat belt violations), and enhanced enforcement and education, through initiatives such as "Click It or Ticket." Since 2001 when "Click It or Ticket" began, safety belt use rates have increased nationwide from 73 percent to 80 percent, saving approximately 3,400 lives.

DC SUPPORTS 2004 "TOYS FOR TOTS" CAMPAIGN

Again this year, the DC government is supporting the "Toys for Tots" campaign to provide some holiday cheer for families in need. Operated by the US Marine Corps Reserves and supported by the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, the program collects new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distributes those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community. Both the MPDC and the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department are again supporting the program in DC. All 33 firehouses in the District and the DC Fireboat are serving as collection points for the 2004 Toys for Tots campaign. In addition, the MPDC is helping to collect toys, identify needy families and assist in the distribution of toys. This past week, MPDC Chief Ramsey and Fire/EMS Chief Adrian Thompson joined Toys for Tots officials and area children in kicking off this year's campaign at the famous Norwegian Electric Train in Union Station. The campaign will conclude on December 23.

NEWS & NOTES

Holiday Safety Tips. Whether you're traveling this holiday season, or just staying home and shopping, the MPDC offers a number of tips to help keep yourself, your family and your property safe. Details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/season/winter.shtm>.

Talk with Chief Ramsey this Week. Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues and takes phone calls on three media programs this week: "Chatting with the Chief," from 6:40-7 pm, Monday, November 29, on WHUR-96.3 FM; "News Talk," from 5-6 pm, Wednesday, December 1, on News Channel 8; and "Ask the Chief," from 10-11 am, Thursday, December 2, on WTOP radio. Details at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/media/media.shtm>.

Hypothermia Watch. For details on DC's Hypothermia Watch program and how you can help, click on the Department of Human Services website www.dhs.dc.gov.

① Details, including the latest state-by-state listings, are available on the NHTSA website:
www.nhtsa.dot.gov/

① Seat belt violations in DC carry a \$50 fine and 2 point on the operator's license. Find out more about "Click It or Ticket" in DC by going to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/clickit.shtm>

① DC also vigorously enforces its tough child passenger safety laws, which require all children up to age 8 to be secured in an age-appropriate safety seat. Details at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/childseat.shtm>

① Learn more about Toys for Tots and how you can get involved by going to:
<http://www.toysfortots.org/home>

① The locations of all DC firehouses can be found on the Fire/EMS website:
www.fems.dc.gov

DATA BOX

Homicides as of 11/26/04

- ◆ 2004: 182
- ◆ 2003: 222
- ◆ % Change: -18.0%
- ◆ Closure Rate: 53.3% (97 closures)

Traffic Fatalities as of 11/26/04

- ◆ 2004: 41
- ◆ 2003: 61
- ◆ % Change: -32.8%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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